DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 212 619 SP 019 658

AUTHOR Dickens, William I.; Corbin, Warren S.
TITLE An Exchange Semester: An Experiment in College-School Collaboration.
PUB DATE [81]
NOTE 9p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College School Cooperation; Faculty Development; Field Experience Programs; Higher Education; High Schools; Inservice Teacher Education; Physical Education; School Districts; Schools of Education; *Secondary School Teachers; Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Educators; *Teacher Exchange Programs; Teacher Improvement; *Teacher Role; *Teaching Experience
IDENTIFIERS Northern Kentucky University

ABSTRACT

A faculty exchange program was initiated between a university and a school district in an attempt to bridge the perceived gap between the role of the teacher educator and that of the classroom practitioner. For one semester, a physical education faculty member at Northern Kentucky University exchanged his fulltime teaching duties with those of a physical education teacher at a local high school. Administrative arrangements for the exchange involved discussions and formal agreement between the university's education department and the local board of education on such matters as pay, fringe benefits, certification, teaching schedules, and nonteaching duties. A detailed proposal was circulated among the university and school system faculty, and a screening process to assess candidates was established. Once selected, the two exchange participants met several times before the beginning of the semester to share resources and ideas. Certain restrictions on duties and responsibilities were recognized because of the temporary nature of the exchange. The exchange resulted in valuable suggestions for the university's preservice field experience program, and both participants felt they had benefited both personally and professionally from the experience. A second exchange is being planned. (FG)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED212619

# AN EXCHANGE SEMESTER: AN EXPERIMENT IN COLLEGE-SCHOOL COLLABORATION

BY: William I. Dickens
Warren S. Corbin

Much has been made of the lamentable fact that the teaching profession is characterized more by those indicators that describe the semiprofessions than the traditional ones. One of the factors cited as an explanation for the failure to achieve parity with law, medicine, and theology has to do with the divergent goals and roles between teacher education faculty in colleges and universities and classroom practitioners in the elementary and secondary schools.

Instead of speaking with one voice on matters crucial to all facets of the profession, our efforts are vitiated by a lack of unity and common purpose. This disjunction has created a "credibility gap" that tends to promote relationships within the profession that are characterized more by suspicion and indifference than collaboration and trust.

By way of illustration, any professor who has taught inservice teachers can attest to the not uncommon complaint that we in higher education have been isolated from the realities of the contemporary classroom for so long that our subject matter is judged to be largely irrelevant and devoid of useful purpose. Our critics call this "the ivory tower syndrome."

SP019658

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Warren S. Corbin
William I. Dickens
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

On the other hand, if college professors have a misconception of the real-life conditions in elementary and secondary classrooms, teachers have an equally distorted view of the expectations and obligations of those of us in higher education. We have been unable to convey in a convincing fashion that, in addition to teaching 6/9/12 hours a week, our task also includes research, study, writing, advising, field supervision, committee work (both within the college or department and the university), community and service-related activities, and off-campus professional activities. Certainly these constitute a varied and demanding job by any standard.

Regardless of the validity or these beliefs, the perception of their validity tends to widen the breach in our professional relationships. Is there anything that teachers in the elementary and secondary schools and education faculty in the colleges and universities can do to bring about a better understanding of their respective roles and mutual concerns?

One program recently initiated at Northern Kentucky University was designed to bridge this gap. In the spring semester 1981, a faculty exchange program was begun whereby a faculty member from the Health/Physical Education faculty at Northern assumed the full-time teaching assignment of a Health and Physical Education teacher at a local public high school. In

turn, the high school teacher was assigned a full-time teaching assignment in the Education Department at Northern. The immediate objectives of the program were twofold: first, to capitalize on the experiences of the participants to improve the preservice physical education program at Northern and second, to enhance the personal and professional growth of the faculty members involved in the exchange.

Administrative Arrangements

Administrative arrangements were developed jointly by the Chairperson of the Education Department at Northern and the Superintendent of a local county school district. The process involved a series of sequential steps.

Step 1. After discussing the general concept of an exchange program, it was agreed that there were enough advantages accruing to both parties that a descriptive statement should be developed that would include a rationale, a listing of specific outcomes for such a program, and an identification of possible problem areas.

Step II. The proposal was reviewed by the Board of Education of the local district and by the Dean of Professional Studies and the Provost at the University. Areas of concern were expressed and discussed but the program was viewed as positive enough to warrant further discussion and explication of details.

Step III. Addressing problems relating to employee pay, fringe benefits, insurance coverage, proper certification, release time for specific activities, teaching schedules, and non-teaching assignments required additional cooperation and consultation from the Kentucky State Department's Bureau of Certification. A detailed proposal was developed as a "Memorandum of Understanding". After review by the Superintendent of Schools, the Dean and Provost, and legal counsels representing each party, the document was approved.

Step IV. Copies of the program and application forms were distributed to interested faculty at the University and all teachers in the school system. Minimum and preferred qualifications were indicated. A deadline for filing applications was specified.

Step V. A screening process was established. There were three applicants who met the qualifications listed by the University. Each was recommended by the principal of his/her building as well as the Curriculum Coordinator of the school district. Each applicant was interviewed by the Education Department Chairperson and the Coordinator of the Health/Physical Education program at the University.

There was only one University candidate interested in the exchange program for the spring semester of 1981. He was interviewed by representatives of the Superintendent. (Later, when his counterpart from the secondary school was

selected, he was interviewed by the building principal of the school where he was to be assigned.)

Step VI. Once the selection process was completed, the exchange participants held several meetings prior to the beginning of the semester. They shared their materials, curriculum guides, teaching plans, and suggestions so as to ensure a smooth transition into their new assignments.

## Restrictions on the Participants

Because of the temporary nature of the exchange, it was agreed that certain restrictions or exemptions should be recognized for each participant.

The University professor would not be expected to assume any coaching or club sponsorship duties. He was also not to assume any of the duties of his counterpart who was the chairperson of the Health/Physical Education department at the high school. Neither was he to be considered as a change agent or curriculum consultant by teachers or administrators at the school.

The high school teacher would not be responsible for advising physical education majors as to scheduling, curriculum requirements, or certification standards. She would also be exempt from service on standing committees of the University or the Education Department. However, she had requested and was allowed to continue to coach the girls track and field team at the high school.

Some Results of the Exchange Semester

The participants were asked to develop comprehensive written evaluations of the program as a result of their experience. Following is a synopsis of some of their remarks.

For the University professor, the experience proved to be one of the single most valuable experiences in his professional life.

First, teaching in a typical high school forced him to critically evaluate instructional objectives, curriculum planning, evaluation criteria, and classroom pedagogy as they related to his classes at the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade levels.

Second, he was afforded the experience of confronting discipline and classroom management problems, inevitable and exasperating classroom disruptions (fire drills, bomb threats, delayed schedules, and school closings due to inclement weather), and the complex dynamics of both the teacher's lounge and an adolescent culture.

Third, and perhaps most important for the University, it allowed for a critical reappraisal of the preservice teacher education program in health and physical education from a vantage point not previously available to the faculty curriculum committee.

The high school teacher who spent the semester teaching and supervising field placements at the University offered the following evaluation of her experience.

First, some candid suggestions relating to placement, management, and supervision in the student teaching program were recommended.

Second, through an assignment working with a variety of school systems in the area of inservice and supervisory programs, she gained valuable new insights into curricular and teaching innovations which enriched and broadened her own perspective on secondary school programs in health and physical education.

Third, by attending department meetings and faculty meetings and programs at the University, being involved in faculty evaluation programs and grant-writing workshops, developing lecture presentations, and attending and participating in state and regional professional meetings, she gained a better understanding of the goals, achievements, problems, and concerns of University faculty in her field.

In addition, both participants cited the new friends and colleagues they acquired as a result of this experiment. The supportive and friendly atmosphere at both the High School and the University was a crucial factor in the success of the exchange program.

## Conclusion

The program was viewed as sufficiently successful by both the school district and the University that a second exchange is currently underway. But to judge the value of this kind of a program, we need to ask whether or not changes were effected in either of the individuals involved or the institutions they represented. On the former, by virtue of personal testimony, we have a clear affirmative as to the value of the program. Perhaps this, in itself, is an adequate measure of success. On the latter, it is probably too early to tell. Should the educational program of either the High School or the University be altered as a result of the experience of the participants, each has gained in a significant way.